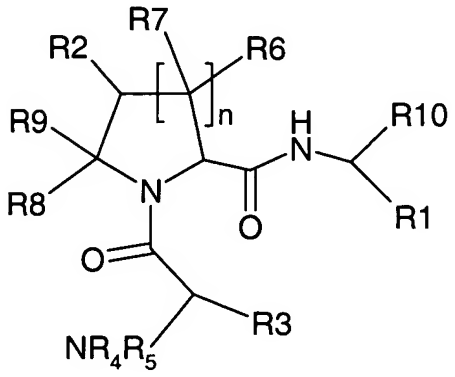
IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

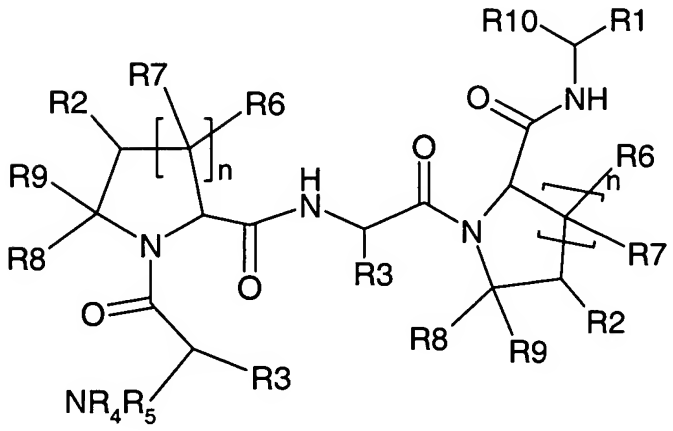
Claims 1-25. (Canceled)

26. (New) A compound having the general structure (I) or (II) as follows :



(I)

or



(II)

wherein :

R1 represents the side chain of an amino acid or an amino acid derivative, preferably of hydrophobic nature, an alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, including CH2CH3 and CH2CF3 ;

R2, identical or different, represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, a hydroxyl function, an alkoxy group, or an (C2-14)aryloxy group, -R2 may also represent a carbonyl group (=O) ;

R3, identical or different, represents the side chain of an amino acid or an amino acid derivative, preferably of hydrophobic nature, an alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or a, substituted or not, (C2-14)aryl or (C2-14)aralkyl group, the aryl moiety thereof being optionally interrupted by at least one heteroatom ;

R4 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms ;

R5 represents a protecting group for the amine function ;

R6 and R7 are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or an, linear, branched, or cyclic, alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a, substituted or not, (C2-14)aryl or (C2-14)aralkyl group, the aryl moiety thereof being optionally interrupted with at least one heteroatom ;

R8 and R9 are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or an, linear, branched, or cyclic, alkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a, substituted or not, (C2-14)aryl or (C2-14)aralkyl group, the aryl moiety thereof being optionally interrupted with at least one heteroatom ;

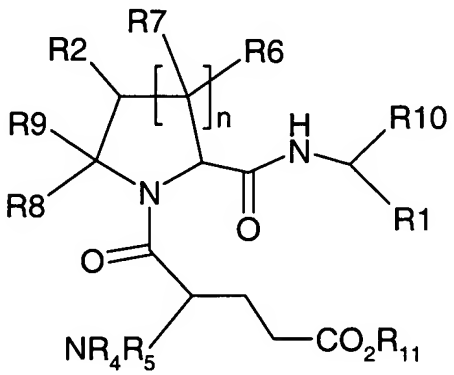
R10 represents an aldehyde (-CHO), an acid group (-COOH), a sulfonic acid (–SO2OH), -COCOOH group, a radical selected in the group consisting of : -COR, -

COOR, -CONRR', -COCOOR, -SO2NRR' (a sulfonamide group), -CONHCOR, -COCONRR', -CONHSO2R, -CHOHCOR, -CHOHCOOR, -CHOHCON-RR', R and R', identical or different, represent an hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl radical, a linear, branched or cyclic alkyl, alkene or alkyne group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an alkoxy group, an amine group or a, substituted or not, (C2-14)aryl, (C2-14)aralkyl, or (C2-14)aralkoxy group, the aryl moiety thereof being optionally interrupted with at least one heteroatom ;

n is 1 or 2 ;

their tautomers, optical and geometrical isomers, racemates, salts, hydrates and mixtures thereof.

27. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein the compound corresponds to the following general formula (III) :



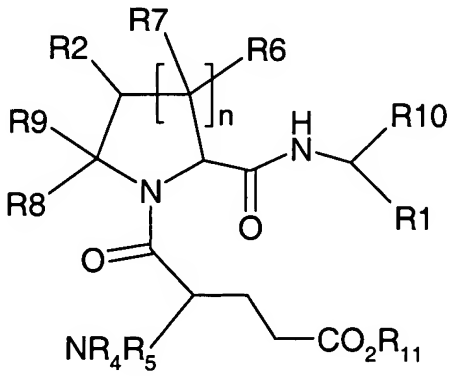
(III)

wherein :

R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10 and n are as defined above and R11 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms inclusive or a carboxy protecting group ;

their tautomers, optical and geometrical isomers, racemates, salts, hydrates and mixtures thereof.

28. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein the compound corresponds to the following general formula (III) :



(III)

in which:

R1 represents an alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms inclusive or the side chain of an amino acid or an amino acid derivative, including CH2-CH3 and CH2CF3;

R2 represents a hydroxyl group, an alkoxy group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or -R2 may also represent a carbonyl group (=O) ;

R4 represents a hydrogen atom ;

R5 represents an amine protecting group ;

R6 and R7 are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, including a cyclohexyl derivative ;

R8 and R9 are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms inclusive ;

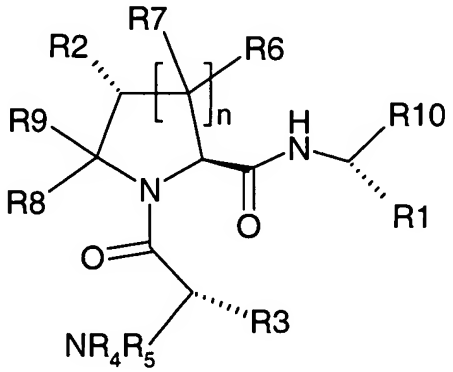
R10 represents an acid group, an ester group, an alkanoyl group, a keto-acid, a keto-ester, a keto-amide or a α-hydroxy-keto derivative ;

R11 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms inclusive or a carboxy protecting group ; and

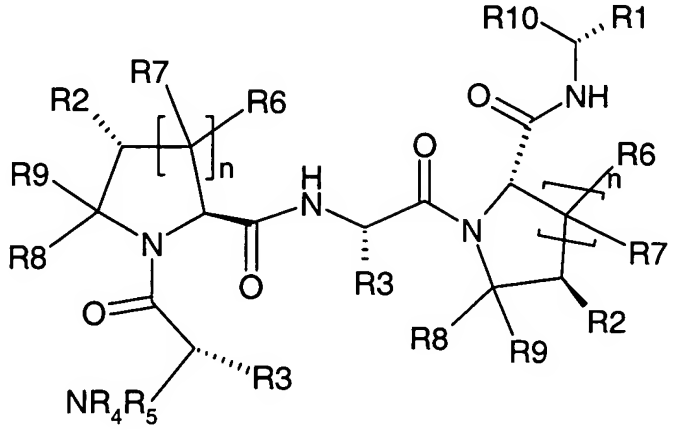
n is 1 or 2 ;

their tautomers, optical and geometrical isomers, racemates, salts, hydrates and mixtures thereof.

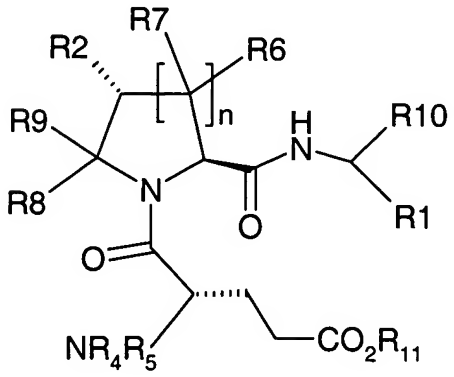
29. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein the compound has the following formulae (Ia), (IIa) or (IIIa) :



(Ia)



(IIa)



(IIIa)

wherein R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10 and n are as defined in claim 1 and R11 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms inclusive or a carboxy protecting group.

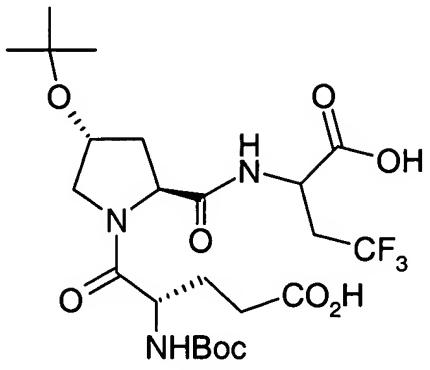
30. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein the amino acid side chain corresponds to any side chain of the naturally occurring (L form) or synthesized (L or D

form) aminoacids (in particular alpha-aminoacids and aminocyclopropanoic acid), or derivative thereof, optionally substituted.

31. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein the amino acid side chain is selected in the group consisting of –CH3, -CH(CH3)2, -CH2-CH(CH3)2, -CH(CH3)C2H5, H, -CH2OH, -CH2CH3, -CH(OH)CH3, -CH2SH, -CH2CF3, -(CH2)2-S-CH3, -CH2CH2CF3, -CH3C2H5, -CH2C6H5, -CH2-C6H4(OH), -CH2CONH2, -(CH2)2CONH2, -CH2COOH, -(CH2)2COOH, -(CH2)4NH2, -(CH2)3NHC(NH2)2, -CH2CH=CH and C6H5.

32. (New) A compound according to claim 26, wherein R5 stands for acetyl, benzyloxycarbonyl (Cbz) or t-butyloxycarbonyl (Boc) groups ; and/or R1 stands for –CH_2-CH_3, -CH_2-CF_3, -CH_2-CH_2-CF_3, -CH_2CHCH_2 or –CH_2-$CHMe_2$; and/or R2 stands for t-butyloxy ; and/or R3 stands for -$(CH_2)_2COOH$, -$CH(CH_3)_2$, or -$(CH_2)_2COOCH_3$; and/or R10 is acid, -CHOHCOR, with R is OH or an alkoxy group (preferably methoxy or ethoxy), keto-acid, keto-ester (preferably –COCOOMe, -COCOOEt or COCOOBn), keto-amide (preferably COCONHMe, COCONHEt or COCONHBn) ; and/or R4 is H ; and/or R6 is H ; and/or R7 is H ; and/or R8 is H ; and/or R9 is H; and/or R10 is H and/or n = 1.

33. (New) A compound according to claim 26, which is selected in the group consisting of :



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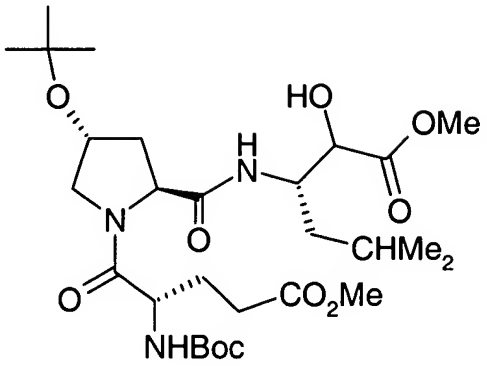

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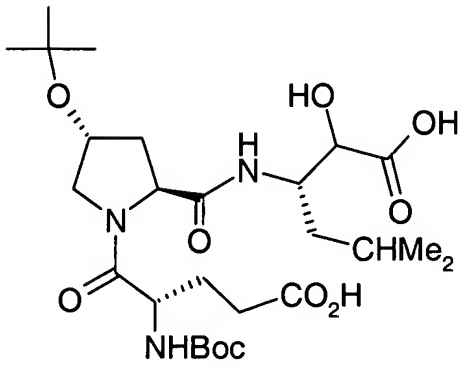

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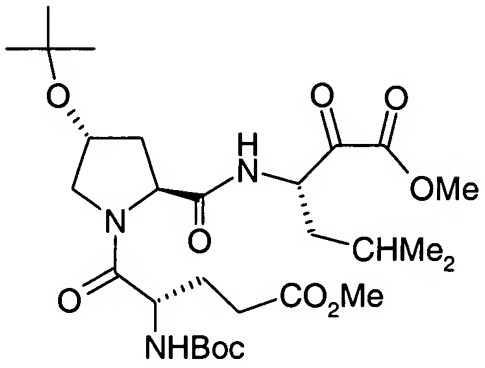

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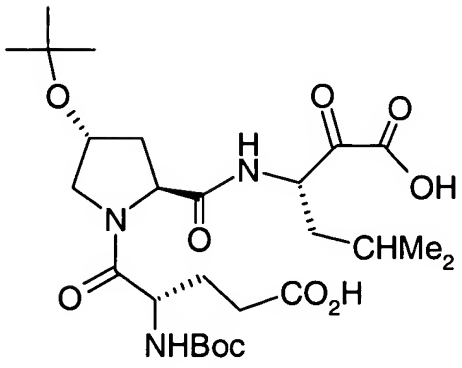

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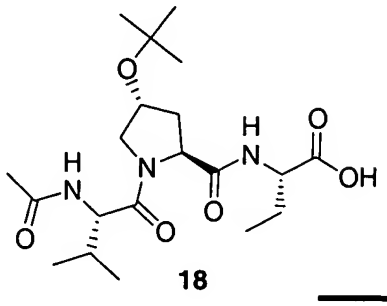

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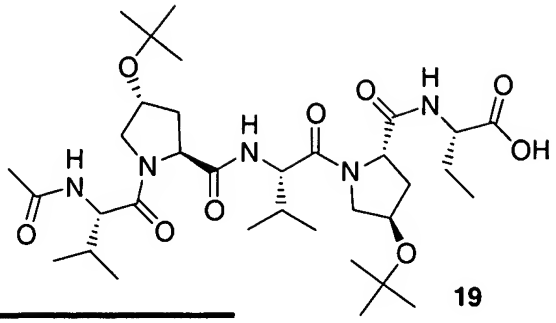

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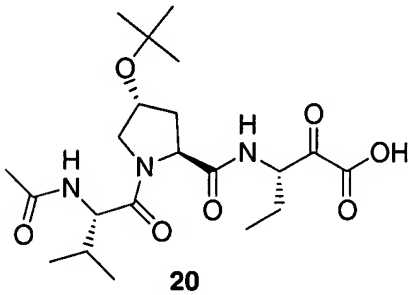

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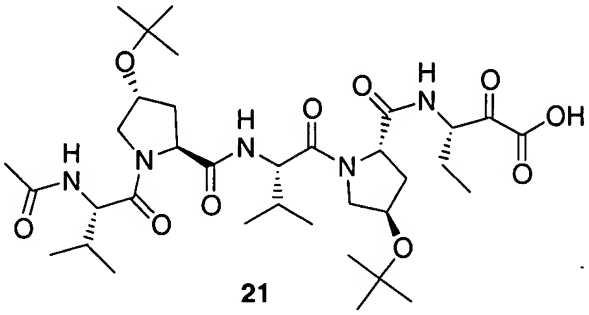

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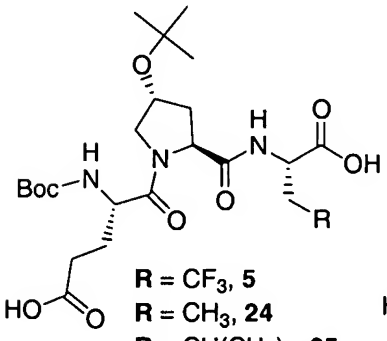
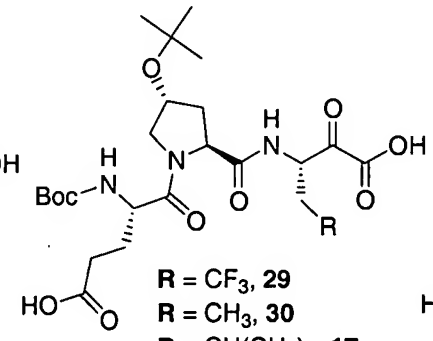
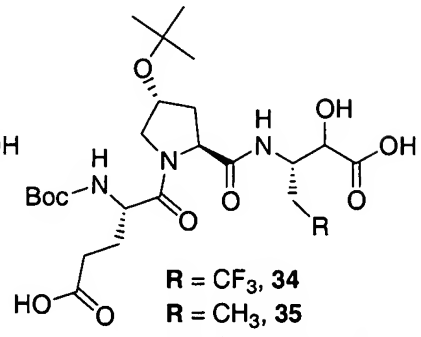


R = CF_3, **5**
R = CH_3, **24**
R = $CH(CH_3)_2$, **25**
R = CH_2CF_3, **26**
R = CH_2CH_3, **27**
R = $CH=CH_2$, **28**

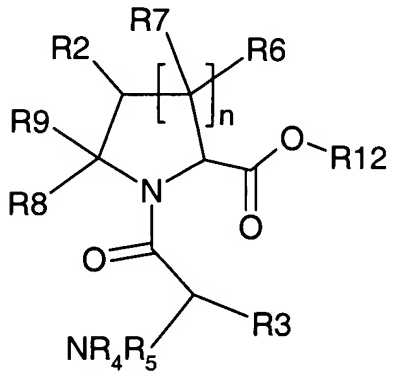


R = CF_3, **29**
R = CH_3, **30**
R = $CH(CH_3)_2$, **17**
R = CH_2CF_3, **31**
R = CH_2CH_3, **32**
R = $CH=CH_2$, **33**



R = CF_3, **34**
R = CH_3, **35**
R = $CH(CH_3)_2$, **13**
R = CH_2CF_3, **36**
R = CH_2CH_3, **37**
R = $CH=CH_2$, **38**

34. (New) A compound corresponding to the following formula (V) :

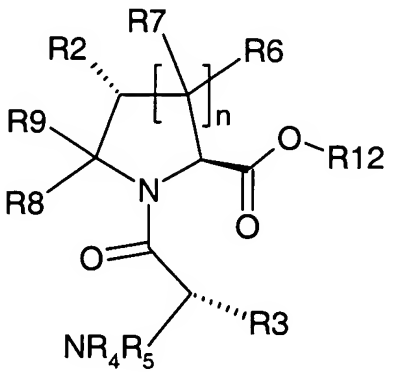


(V)

wherein R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, and R9 are as defined in claim 26 and R12 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group (in particular, methyl, ethyl or t-butyl), alkenyl (allyl), an aralkyl (for instance, benzyl) or a cycloalkyl group; and n is 1 or 2;

their tautomers, optical and geometrical isomers, racemates, salts, hydrates and mixtures thereof.

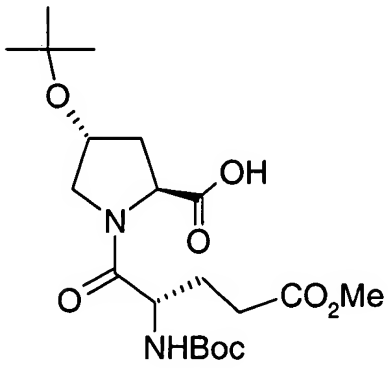
35. (New) A compound according to claim 34, wherein it presents the following formula (Va) :



(Va)

36. (New) A compound according to claim 34, wherein it corresponds to compounds of formula (V) wherein R6, R7, R8 and R9, independently from each other, represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl, an alkoxy group, or a cycloalkyl group, and preferably a hydrogen atom.

37. (New) A compound according to claim 34, which is selected in the group consisting of:



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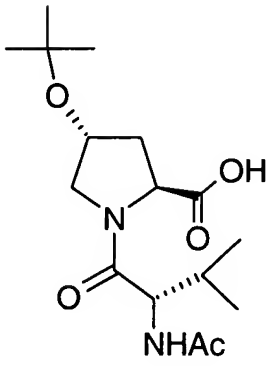

38. (New) A compound according to claim 34, useful as an active pharmaceutical ingredient, such as an antiviral agent (antiviral HCV agent).

39. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one compound as defined in claim 26 and a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle or support.

40. (New) A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 39, said composition further comprising at least one immunomodulatory agent, other antiviral agent, other inhibitor of hepatitic C protease; inhibitor of other targets in the HCV life cycle, or combinations thereof.

41. (New) A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 39, for treating a disease related to an infection by a virus (preferably flavivirus, such as dengue virus, yellow fever virus, West Nile fever virus, or HCV), bacteria or pathogen dependent upon a serine protease for proliferation

42. (New) A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 39, for treating HCV infection and the like.

43. (New) A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 39, for treating hepatitis C virus infection and complications thereof, in particular chronic hepatitis, cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma and extrahepatic manifestation.

44. (New) A method for the treatment of a disease associated with an infection by a virus (preferably flavivirus, such as dengue virus, yellow fever virus, West Nile fever virus or HCV), bacteria or pathogen dependent upon a serine protease for proliferation, by administering to subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of at least one compound as defined in claim 26.

45. (New) A method for the treatment of a disease associated with HCV infection, by administering to subject in need of such treatment an effective amount of at least one compound as defined in claim 26.

46. (New) A method of evaluating the modulation properties of test compounds towards NS3 serine protease, particularly HCV NS3 serine protease, said method implementing *in vitro* primary cultures of human hepatocytes and compounds as defined in claims 26.

47. (New) A method for screening and/or characterizing compounds that present antiviral activity, in particular antiviral HCV activity, by implementing *in vitro* primary cultures of human hepatocytes and compounds as defined in claim 26.

48. (New) A method for screening and/or characterizing compounds that present antiviral activity, said method comprising the following steps:

a) contacting a test compound with the *in vitro* primary cultures of human hepatocytes described herein in presence of HCV or active part thereof, and

b) determining the antiviral activity of the test compound in comparison with the antiviral activity of one of the compounds as defined in claim 26.

49. (New) A method to treat or prevent viral contamination of materials by implementing at least one compound as defined in claim 26.